

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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BIG GAME HUNTER IS BIG LOSER AFTER RIGGING THE ODDS TO GET A DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP

A California big game hunter, trying to complete his "grand slam," came out a big loser after stacking the deck with 22 fraudulent applications to get one of Nevada's coveted hunting tags for desert bighorn sheep. "Grand slam" is a term used by some big game hunters to describe taking four North American bighorn sheep: the desert bighorn, the dall, the stone, and the Rocky Mountain sheep.

His more than sporting chance to get the trophy animal cost Krosrow B. Sanjabi, 41, of Chico, California, a \$10,000 fine, a monthly report to a probation officer for 2 years, and loss of all hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges throughout the United States for 2 years.

Sanjabi persuaded 22 friends and relatives to apply for one of the 80 tags Nevada issued in 1977 in a random drawing, and his playing of the odds paid off when one of his friends was awarded a tag. Sanjabi, having taken a desert bighorn sheep in 1971, was ineligible under Nevada law to apply for another tag for 10 years. Accompanied by the legal tagholder, his wife and son, none of whom hunted, as well as by two licensed Nevada hunting guides, Sanjabi hunted the mountains of southern Nevada and bagged the big game animal without having the required tag issued in his own name. He then took the sheep across State lines to California, a violation of the Lacey Act. The Lacey Act is a Federal law that prohibits the interstate transportation of wildlife taken in violation of State law.

His manipulation of Nevada's random drawing came to light when he accompanied the legal tagholder to the Nevada Department of Wildlife where hunters are required to fill out report forms on their hunt and the sheep they obtained. He was recognized by Nevada wildlife officers, whose suspicions were aroused. Together with special agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service, they began an investigation of the incident which culminated in May 1979 when Sanjabi was served a search warrant. The

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illegal sheep mount, on which Sanjabi had substituted a longer set of horns, was seized along with the original horns from the illegally killed sheep. Sanjabi was arrested under a Federal warrant and was indicted September 1 by a Federal Grand Jury in Las Vegas on one count of conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act and one count of violating the Lacey Act. After pleading guilty in Nevada, Sanjabi's sentencing took place in California.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Shirley Smith of Reno, Nevada, called the \$10,000 fine "one of the largest ever handed down in this part of the country for a hunting violation. In addition to the fine, Sanjabi's special probationary conditions prohibiting him from hunting will be especially painful, as he has hunted frequently in the past."

Clark Bavin, Chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Law Enforcement, said that in taking the desert bighorn sheep, Sanjabi became part of the elite group to get a grand slam, some of whom have been known to pay up to \$25,000 to complete.

"The fine illustrates the seriousness of the violation and reinforces our wildlife program in Nevada," Bavin said. "Working closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Nevada Wildlife Department, we have already had several indictments and expect results in a dozen similar cases in the coming year."

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